

**Washington State Human Rights Commission  
MEETING OF  
June 23, 2005**

**Kitsap County Fairgrounds – Eagles Nest  
Silverdale, WA**

**MINUTES**

**ATTENDANCE**

**Commissioners:** J. Reiko Callner, Commission Chair; Ellis Casson; Dallas Barnes; Deborah Sioux Cano-Lee; and Jerry Hebert.

**Staff:** Tanya Calahan, Executive Assistant to the Commissioners.

**Guests:** Ted George; Mary Jones ; Crystal Bagby; Joyce Browning; Dennis Hon; Kris Danielson; Nancy Sigo; Celeste Fawn Miller; Aggie Pratt; Eir Van Kleck; and Arthur Stratton.

*(Audiotape one – side one)*

**OPENING AND WELCOME**

Commissioner Callner called the meeting to order at 7:25 p.m. She provided an overview of the Commission's jurisdiction under the Washington State Law Against Discrimination, RCW 49.60.

**OPEN FORUM**

Several individuals spoke during the open forum.

Ted George, who is an elder of the Suquamish Tribe was the first guest to speak. He commented about the need to reach out to minority youths and educate them. He also thanked Commissioner Hebert for his work in the community.

Legislator Sherry Appleton could not attend the night's forum because of an emergency. She expressed her regrets.

Many guests commented about challenges faced by Native Americans. Some key areas touched on were: the high incarceration rate of Native American youths; the Makah

whaling issue; race discrimination. One individual relayed that there is a misperception that Native American's are prosperous because of the success of casinos. Parents of school aged children commented about the problems they were experiencing with Kitsap County school districts. One local African American youth experienced racism and was called the "n" word. The parent felt that the school did not properly respond.

*(Audio tape one – side two through audio tape two – side two)*

Several individuals relayed their personal experiences as Native Americans. One youth commented about the lack of structured program for Native American youths and that too much money is spent on law enforcement instead.

Audience members expressed appreciation to the Commission for holding forums. Commissioner Callner thanked those in attendance for taking the time to meet with them.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tanya Y. Calahan  
Executive Assistant to the Commissioners

**Washington State Human Rights Commission  
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**MINUTES**

**Commissioners:** J. Reiko Callner, Commission Chair; Ellis Casson; Dallas Barnes; Deborah Sioux Cano-Lee; and Jerry Hebert.

**Staff:** Marc Brenman, Executive Director; Tanya Calahan, Executive Assistant to the Commissioners; Berneta Walraven and Jerry Lee, Operations Managers; and Idolina Reta, Special Assistant.

**Guests:** David Lord, Washington Protection and Advocacy System and Access to Justice Board and Mr. Nakata, Access to Justice Board.

**OPENING AND WELCOME**

*(Audio tape one – side one)*

Commissioner Callner called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Commissioners considered the minutes of the May 19, 2005 meeting. Commissioner Callner requested that Tanya Calahan append the minutes to include the email from Sharon Ortiz with the update that she received about the progress made in Spokane since the public forum on May 19, 2005.

Commissioner Barnes made a motion to approve the May 19, 2005 minutes with the noted change. Commissioner Hebert seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED.**

The Commissioners considered the May 20, 2005 minutes. Commissioner Callner requested more detail regarding the Thurgood Marshall Middle School discussion. More detail regarding the budget should be added under the Executive Director's report also.

The Commissioners agreed to postpone approval of the May 20, 2005 minutes so Tanya Calahan can add more substantial language to them and re-circulate a new draft.

The Commissioners discussed recent memos from Assistant Attorney General Traci Friedl. Commissioner Hebert asked to table the discussion of Commissioners doing case investigations to a future meeting. He noted that this topic would be an appropriate item for a planning session.

They then discussed the memo from Traci about travel reimbursement. Ms. Friedl highlighted Office of Financial Management policy regarding appropriate travel reimbursements for Commissioners.

### **CASE CLOSURES**

The Commissioners discussed several case closures. No corrections were noted. Commissioner Hebert then made a motion to approve the case closures. Commissioner Callner seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

The Commissioners agreed to hold a Special Commission meeting on June 30, 2005 at 10 a.m. to approve case closures for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) contracts.

Commissioner Lee commented about the quality of the cases and expressed that the quality should not suffer to make case contract deadlines.

*(Audio tape one – side two)*

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Executive Director Marc Brenman highlighted his monthly Executive Director's Report. He specifically spoke about personnel changes that happened since the report was written.

There was discussion about the role of the personnel officer. Discussion ensued about the need for a human resources professional in a small agency such as the Commission.

### **ACCESS TO JUSTICE BOARD**

Mr. David Lord of the Washington Protection and Advocacy System spoke about barriers to access to justice. The Access to Justice Board developed a guide directed at people that work in courthouses. The guide's purpose is to educate those individuals about barriers to access in courtrooms. They provided training at access to justice conferences.

Commissioner Callner called for a motion or a consensus to work on an access to justice plan. The Commissioners agreed by consensus to pursue an Access to Justice Plan.

### **2005 COMMISSION MEETING DATES**

Commissioner Callner spoke about the remaining meeting dates to address possible public forums.

Commissioner Callner then made a motion to amend the Commission meeting schedule to accommodate a public forum in Seattle on November 18, 2005 and remove the Thursday night meeting scheduled for July 21, 2005. Commissioner Hebert seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioner Lee invited the Commissioners and staff to the Pow Wow Opening Ceremonies at 7 p.m. at Daybreak Star in Seattle on Friday, July 22, 2005.

### **MAKAH PROJECT**

Commissioner Hebert spoke about the status of the Makah project. The committee members are selected and a written report is drafted. The issue regarding allowable travel reimbursements for committee members needs to be resolved. There would be daytime committee meetings most likely at Daybreak Star in Magnolia Park in Seattle.

### **SHORELINE HEARINGS**

Commissioner Hebert spoke about the status of the Shoreline Hearings project. The group is writing a report that will go before the Commissioners. Representative Chase started this project. Technical Assistance could be offered to develop a task force in Shoreline. Contact can be made with the US Attorney's Office too. A draft letter will come before the Commissioners. Commissioner Hebert will bring it to the next meeting.

*(Audio tape two – side one)*

Commissioner Barnes spoke about the need for a written document that explains the various projects that the Commissioners are committing too.

Commissioner Casson commented about the need for patience as the Commissioners get out in the community more. The Commission has been conservative in this area in the past. He spoke about the need for Commissioners to be sensitive to each other's causes. They need to work together.

### **WSU PROJECT**

The Washington State University (WSU) project is underway. There is an urgent need at WSU to address the racial allegations on the campus. The Board of Regents wants a written report from the committed by the end of June 2005. Many people are eagerly awaiting the report.

### **PROCESS FOR COMMISSION REVIEW OF EMPLOYEE DISPUTES**

The Commissioners discussed the draft policy for handling disputes regarding the executive director. Commissioner Hebert asked for Marc Brenman's input about the process. He suggested some grammatical changes and the intent of some of the language. Commissioner Barnes commented about the need to add more language also. Tanya Calahan will work with Assistant Attorney General Traci Friedl to add the agreed upon language and finalize the policy.

The Commissioners discussed the upcoming civil rights presentation by Rita Bender. Commissioner Barnes made a motion to approve the partnership proposal for Ms. Bender's "Mississippi Civil Rights Legacy" presentation. Commissioner Hebert seconded the motion. Commissioner Casson expressed concern about Executive Director Marc Brenman's lack of involvement with this event. MOTION CARRIED.

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT CONT..**

Commissioner Barnes asked several questions about Marc Brenman's Executive Director's Report.

Discussion ensued about equity in education issues. Commissioner Hebert asked about discipline that is disproportionately applied to minority students. Mr. Brenman commented about alternative dispute resolution for these education complaints. There was then discussion about proposals for making inquiries about the Kent School District situation.

*(Audio tape three – side one)*

Commissioner Hebert wants a detailed monthly budget allotment breakdown on a monthly or at least quarterly basis.

Commissioner Hebert asked about the budget implications of the EEOC contract losses. The agency could lose up to \$100,000.

### **DEPUTY DIRECTOR POSITION & OPERATIONS MANAGER POSITION**

Marc Brenman commented about the need for an operations manager first before hiring a deputy director.

The Commissioners and Mr. Brenman then discussed the process for hiring a deputy director. Commissioner Barnes asked about the salary, which should be closer to the executive director's salary.

(Audio tape three – side two)

He also commented about the year requirements for experience for a deputy which should be at least eight years or more instead of four years.

Commissioner Casson commented about the need for a deputy director to complement the executive director's weaknesses. The executive director should have a strong say about whom the deputy should be.

Marc Brenman commented that the Commissioners will be involved with the deputy director hiring process.

Commissioner Barnes stated that the Commissioners should be involved earlier on in the deputy director hiring process. Discussion then took place about the process to screen applicants. Commissioner Barnes wants the Commissioners to be involved on the interview panel.

(Audio tape four – side one)

Commissioner Barnes wants the Commissioners to also be involved in choosing the three top candidates.

Commissioner Casson expressed that the executive director's hands should not be tied to have to pick only three candidates.

The Commissioners will be included on the interview panel with the executive director. Staff will update the written timeline for the deputy director hiring process to reflect this change.

Commissioner Callner volunteered to participate on the panel. She and Commissioner Lee will represent the Commissioners on the interview panel.

Commissioner Hebert made a motion to adopt the deputy director proposal with the following additions: to change the top salary to \$85, 000; change the experience from four years to eight years, and the agreed upon changes to the hiring timeline. Commissioner Callner seconded the motion. Commissioner Barnes abstained. MOTION CARRIED.

### **AGENCY REORGANIZATION PROPOSAL**

Marc Brenman proposed that Operations Manager Berneta Walraven head a Housing Unit. Operations Manager Jerry Lee will move to the Seattle Office. Operations Manager Sharon Ortiz will supervise both the Spokane and Yakima Office.

Ms. Walraven and Mr. Lee spoke about the positive aspects of these changes. Commissioner Casson expressed concern for Ms. Ortiz having to travel between the Spokane and Yakima Office. He also inquired about additional salary for the added responsibilities.

(Audio tape four – side two)

It would be easier to justify more money for Ms. Ortiz according to Mr. Brenman if she supervises more staff.

Another option presented was to close the Yakima office.

There was discussion about salary review for the Operations Managers. The Commissioners approved by consensus to the recommended restructuring of the Operations Managers.

### **COMMISSIONER ACTIVITIES**

Commissioner Hebert attended the Association of Washington Cities luncheon for the Diversity Awards. Vancouver received the big award. He volunteered to be a judge next year.

Commissioner Barnes recently helped the Pasco School District complete their strategic plan.

The Commissioners discussed how they should attend various events on behalf of the Commission. The process should be institutionalized in writing.

### **COMPLAINT INTAKE PROCESS**

Idolina Reta spoke about the agency's complaint intake process.

(Audio tape five – side one)

Ms. Reta explained the crisis in the Intake Unit. There was an extraordinarily amount (about 200) of completed complainant questionnaires (CQ's) (200) waiting for drafted complaints.

Staff is working diligently to address complete the backlogged CQ's.

### **AGING CASES**



There was then discussion about aging cases and how they are tracked. The managers spoke about the aging cases in their individual offices and what they're doing to address them. They track the cases assigned to their staff.

### **COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE INVESTIGATION PROCESS**

The Commissioners and staff discussed the mechanism to address customer service complaints.

*(Audio tape five – side two)*

The Commissioners asked about tracking less than eight and sexual orientation.

The Commissioners discussed possible dates for their workshop with Consultant Dee Endelman. The tentative dates are July 28, 2005 in the evening and Friday, July 29, 2005.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Commissioner Callner announced that the Commissioners will enter an executive session at 4:25 p.m. to evaluate performance of public employees.

### **ADJOURN**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tanya Y. Calahan  
Executive Assistant to the Commissioners

